

Protocol for Out of Area Placement – Recruitment, Retention, Training, and Support (RRTS)

The ideal place for children is with their families; when it is not possible to keep a child in the child's own home, keeping the child close to that home is the desired alternative. Keeping children close to their home preserves connections to their families, schools, and community based supports.

An expectation of the RRTS contract is that children will be placed in a foster home within close proximity to their home when out of home care is needed. The RRTS contract also expects that foster families will receive the support and training needed to prevent lateral moves or disruptions and facilitating reunification. This protocol supports these expectations.

When it is believed a child needs a foster home outside of the Service Area, the following will occur:

1. A staffing with the Department of Human Services Case Manager/Juvenile Court Officer, Supervisor, and Social Work Administrator/Chief Juvenile Court Officer determines one or more of the following applies:
 - a) A foster home within the Service Area of the child's residence that can meet the needs of the child cannot be located.
 - b) An out of Service Area placement is closer to where the child lives and will facilitate reunification of the child and parents or facilitate a relationship with another identified permanency option.
2. If #1 above has been met, the placing Service Area Social Work Administrator may grant approval for the RRTS contractor to search other Service Areas for a potential match. The RRTS provider shall email their counterparts in other service areas, including the requesting service area.
3. If a prospective home is identified, RRTS will contact the receiving Service Area Licensing Supervisor to view the potential of the home being offered to the sending Service Area for placement.
4. If no barriers/concerns are noted, RRTS will contact the sending Service Area Case Manager to discuss the potential match.
5. The placing Service Area RRTS contractor retains responsibility for coordinating the referral for match until a match is accepted by the sending Service Area.

Note:

- a) It is considered best practice to target out of Service Area searches to close proximity vs. statewide searches.
- b) This protocol applies to all counties outside the sending Service Area, i.e., is applicable to Contiguous Counties.

When a foster family moves from one Service Area to another Service Area, the following will occur:

1. The RRTS contractor will notify the DHS licensing worker in the current Service Area that the family is moving.
2. The RRTS contractor will notify the RRTS contractor in the Service Area where the family is relocating with the address and date of the move.
3. The DHS licensing staff will transfer the file to the new Service Area.

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4. The RRTS contractor in the new Service Area will provide supportive services and training to the foster family.

When a foster family needs to attend training in another Service Area, the following will occur:

1. The RRTS contractor in the foster family's home Service Area will contact the RRTS contractor in the Service Area where training is being held to request the family attend training.
2. If space is available the RRTS contractor in the Service Area where training is being held will provide approval for the foster family to attend.
3. The trainer will provide a certificate to the foster family after attending the training.
4. The training certificate will be provided to the foster family's home Service Area to document attendance at training and hours of credit.